

Books Received in Week Ending Feb. 5

Fiction.

THE BUCCANEER FARMER. By HAROLD BINDLOSS. The romantic adventures of an English gentleman farmer in the Caribbean, including an exciting share in a Central American revolution. New York: Frederick A. Stokes Company. \$1.50.

THE CHALLENGE TO SIRIUS. By SHEILA KAYE-SMITH. The hero begins life in Sussex, fights on the side of the Confederacy in the American civil war, and then buries himself in Yucatan. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co. \$1.90.

THE CRESCENT MOON. By F. BRITT YOUNG. Romance "of devotion and treachery, ambition and expiation" in a white outpost in East Africa. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co. \$1.75.

THE HAPPY HYPOCRITE. By MAX BEERDORF. A little classic which first appeared in the *Yellow Book* and was afterward made into a play. This edition has twenty-four illustrations in color by George Sheringham. New York: John Lane Company. \$7.50.

EATING IN TWO OR THREE LANGUAGES. By IVO S. COSS. Maybe this isn't fiction, but it's almost too funny to be fact. New York: George H. Doran Company. 60 cents.

NUMBER SEVENTEEN. By LOUIS TRACY. A murder mystery in London which has its roots in Chinese detective Fumennax figures in the story. New York: Edward J. Clode. \$1.50.

SCORE BY INNINGS. By CHARLES E. VAN LOAN. Baseball stories which have appeared in the magazines. Follows Mr. Van Loan's *Force!* composed of golf stories. He plans to do a book about each sport. New York: George H. Doran Company. \$1.50.

THE EAGLE'S EYE. By WILLIAM J. FLYNN. "A true story of the Imperial German Government's spies and intrigues in America from facts furnished by the recently retired chief of the Secret Service." The novelization is by Courtney Ryler Cooper. New York: Prospect Press, 186 to 192 West Fourth street. \$1.50.

THE SECRET CITY. By HUGH WALPOLE. Deals with Petrograd, but not with the outward manifestations of war, but with "the dark forests of the hearts of men." The time is the coming and bursting of the revolution. New York: George H. Doran Company. \$1.60.

TAM O' THE SCOTS. By EDGAR WALLACE. Delightful story of the high spots in the career of a Scot who began the war as a slacker and finished as a super-ace. Boston: Small, Maynard & Co. \$1.25.

History.

WRITINGS ON AMERICAN HISTORY, 1915. Compiled by GRACE GIBBERN GRIFFIN. A bibliography of books and articles on United States and Canadian history published in 1916. New Haven: Yale University Press.

War Books.

DEAR FOLKS AT HOME. Compiled by KEMPER F. COWING and edited by COURTNEY RYLER COOPER. "The glorious story of the United States Marines in France as told by their letters from the battlefield." Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company. \$2.

NAVAL POWER IN THE WAR. By Commander C. C. GILL, U. S. N. Story of naval operations brought down to the signing of the armistice by an officer who saw active duty in the cruiser and transport service. New York: George H. Doran Company. \$1.50.

SOLDIER OF THE LEGION. By JOHN BOWEN and CHARLES L. MACGREGOR. Written by a Legionnaire of Canby, Minn., with whom Mr. MacGregor collaborates. Minneapolis: Charles L. MacGregor, 1111 Nicollet avenue. \$1.25.

SNATCHES FROM A DIARY. By MARY G. MURTAUGH. Thoughts and emotions of an American girl whose soldier lover is at war. Boston: Four Seas Company. \$1.

DOUGHBOY DOPE FROM A TO Z. By Sergeant D. G. ROVSE and Corporal M. J. KORSE, U. S. A. Daughday philosophy with pen and ink drawings by the editor and the artist of the east defense publication *On Guard*. New York: Frank K. Kane Company. 75 cents.

WAR AND REVOLUTION IN RUSSIA, 1914-1917. By Gen. BASIL GOURKO. Gen. Gourko was Russia's chief of staff at the time of the Russian revolution, and after that for three months commander-in-chief of the Russian western armies. New York: The Macmillan Company. \$4.

THE DAREDEVIL OF THE ARMY. By Capt. A. P. CONCORAN. Experiences as a "buzzer" and despatch rider. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co. \$1.50.

THE FREE SEAS IN WAR. By Sir FRANCIS PIGGOTT. Contains also extracts from the writings and speeches of David Urquhart. London: P. S. King & Son, Ltd., 2 and 4 Great Smith street, Westminster. 2 shillings 6 pence.

Verse.

RHYMES OF THE RED TRIANGLE. Verses by HAMPHDEN GORDON, pictures by JOYCE DENNIS. Very amusing English verse with colored illustrations. New York: John Lane Company.

Biography.

COLONEL JOHN SCOTT OF LONG ISLAND 1634 (?) 1696. By WILBUR C. ABBOTT. Prof. Abbott says that Col. John Scott's life, done by Daniel Defoe, could as readily pass as fiction as *Captain Jack*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

ALFRED RUSSEL WALLACE: THE STORY OF A GREAT DISCOVERER. By LAUREL T. HOGGREN. A brief biography in the *Pioneers of Progress Series* published in London by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge. New York: The Macmillan Company. \$1.

Reconstruction.

AMERICA AND BRITAIN. By ANDREW C. McLAUGHLIN. Addresses by the head of the Department of History in Chicago University delivered before the British ordonnances during the war. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co. \$2.

THE VOCATIONAL REEDUCATION OF MAIMED SOLDIERS. By LEON DE PAEUW. Deals with Belgian experience in fitting wounded soldiers for earning a living. Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press. \$1.50.

EXPLAINING THE BRITISHERS. By FREDERICK WILLIAM WILK. The story of England's part in the war as seen by an American, the representative in Germany and England of the *Chicago Daily News*, and in Germany of the *London Daily Mail*. New York: George H. Doran Company. \$1.

Political Problems.

THE PROBLEM OF A NATIONAL BUDGET. By WILLIAM FRANKLIN WILCOUGHBY. One of a series of volumes, *Studies in Administration*, published by the Institute for Government Research. The author is director of that institute. The book is a scientific study with special reference to the adoption of a budget system by the American Government. Bibliography. Index. New York: D. Appleton & Co. \$2.75.

THE MOVEMENT FOR BUDGETARY REFORM IN THE STATES. By WILLIAM FRANKLIN WILCOUGHBY. One of a series of volumes, *Studies in Administration*, published by the Institute for Government Research. The author is director of that institute. Describes the progress of budgetary reform in the States of the United States. Headway has been made chiefly in the last four or five years. Bibliography. Index. New York: D. Appleton & Co. \$2.75.

Business.

DRAFTING ROOM METHODS: STANDARDS AND FORMS. By CHARLES D. COLLINS. Reference book for engineering officers and draftsmen. Illustrated with many diagrams and drawings. Statistical tables for sheet and plate iron and steel, wire gauges, &c. Bibliography. Index. New York: D. Van Nostrand Company. \$2.

For Children.

THE FAIRIES' ANNUAL. By CUTH STARR JOHNS. Fairy stories mostly dealing with natural phenomena. Illustrated in color and in black and white. New York: John Lane Company. \$3.

For Boys.

AVIATION BOOK. A lively story in large type and the present tense, with many splendid illustrations in black and white and color. For boys from 6 to 12. New York: McLaughlin Brothers.

Literary Studies.

CURRENTS AND EDDIES IN THE ENGLISH ROMANTIC GENERATION. By FREDERICK E. PIERCE. Traces the various literary groups that formed and scattered in England between the French revolution and the rise of Tennyson. New Haven: Yale University Press. \$3.

DANTE. By HENRY DWIGHT SEDGWICK. "An elementary book for those who seek in the great poet the teacher of spiritual life." New Haven: Yale University Press. \$1.50.

THE ENGLISH VILLAGE: A LITERARY STUDY 1750-1850. By JULIA PATTON. Study of the village in English literature during one hundred years. Indexed. New York: The Macmillan Company. \$1.50.

Drama.

THE BROKEN IMAGE. By LAWRENCE LANGNER. Play in one act. New York: Egnont Arens, Washington Square Book Shop, 17 West Eighth street. 35 cents.

PATENT APPLIED FOR. By LAWRENCE LANGNER. Play in one act. New York: Egnont Arens, Washington Square Book Shop, 17 West Eighth street. 35 cents.

WASHINGTON: THE MAN WHO MADE US. By PERRY MACKAY. Mr. Mackay calls this a ballad play. There are a prologue and three acts followed by an epilogue. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. \$1.75.

Nature Study.

OUR WINTER BIRDS. By FRANK M. CHAPMAN. A popular handbook with illustrations that should enable any one to identify birds. New York: D. Appleton & Co. \$1.

Science.

A CENTURY OF SCIENCE IN AMERICA. Edited by EDWARD SALLISBURY DANA. Written with special reference to the *American Journal of Science*, 1818-1918. New Haven: Yale University Press. \$1.

Religion.

MANNA OF THE SOUL. Compiled by the Rev. F. X. LASANCE. Thin edition of a prayer book. New York: Benziger Brothers. \$1.

Miscellaneous.

WEBSTER'S NEW HANDY DICTIONARY. Based upon Webster's New International Dictionary. New York: American Book Company.

THE DETROIT NEWS: 1873-1917. By LEE A. WHITE. A handsomely illustrated history of this newspaper and description of its present plant. Detroit, Mich.: Detroit News.

VADEMECUM FOR THE USE OF OFFICERS, INTERPRETERS AND CADETS OF THE MILITARY COLLEGES. By EUGENE PLUMON. The fifth edition of one of the Guides Plumon, containing French and English technical and military terms. Paris: Librairie Hachette et Cie.

The Challenge Too Serious

By HARRY ESTY DOUNCE.

SOME very big wigs found *Sussex Gorse* a big novel. However that may have been, its author's new work is not big by any means. The plan of *The Challenge to Sirius* was ambitious and interesting; it might with the right execution have yielded anything—though off-hand you cannot name the living writer of our language who would have both the power to vitalize it through, and the inclination to do the really appalling amount of documentive drudgery that the plan exacts and failed to get from its maker.

Here is a sort of Ulysses; he is born and reared on the Isle of Oxney, "a little pip of a county wedged between Sussex and Kent"; he goes up to try the London Greenwich village of the days when Charlotte Brontë was Currer Bell, and tries it through sixty-nine pages; presently he goes to America to fight on the Southern side through the Civil War, which lasts 160 pages; he leaves it to take up forty-five in the jungle of Yucatan.

Sirius symbolizes Divine Indifference; and the mystical connotation of the title, read by this hint, is woven through the odyssey very thinly and negligently. It doesn't amount to enough to excuse the author from knowing her way about; and neither does Rainger, the hero, amount to enough as an interpretation. The instant

he and Miss Kaye-Smith are off the Isle of Oxney, her grasp of him goes slack, and Divine Indifference stirs her far less than her own enfeebling help book.

Indeed, by the time of the American voyage, she frankly gives up both Sirius and the log of Rainger's soul as hopeless jobs, and depends upon straight episodic narrative to carry her along until it comes time to bring Rainger back to Oxney. Now straight episodic narrative (unless you invent a kingdom of Ruritania, or range so far back into history that only antiquarians can dog you, or blithely throw solid accessories to the winds and rattle off a sheer yarn for a D. W. Griffiths to covet) lays a burden of research on the narrator. If serious, he has got to be up on accessory detail. And Miss Kaye-Smith and her characters are as serious as influenza pneumonia—especially in the rare places where they mean to be lightminded.

She may be very good on Yucatan. She makes that effect. Unfortunately little happens there to Rainger's soul and the challenge, and nothing to the narrative. Eleven years lapse blithely in lush tropical surroundings.

But she is dreadful on the Civil War. American readers will not understand how an author capable of the Oxney parts could nerve herself to tackle this part so pitifully unequipped. If she can't read American fact, could she not nobly have dipped into some of our patently worthy fiction? Is Mary Johnston living in vain, so far as England goes? Miss Kaye-Smith seems to have travelled in a hurry through the South, and to have talked with assorted young American men of today. Perhaps our soldiers in England or in France. Her history—which, by the way, embodies Pittsburgh Landing and Vicksburg and Lookout Mountain—is simply fudged from popular historians, and fudged as no Sophomore faking a term essay would have dared fudge, say the history of the Indian Mutiny.

To pick up a foreign novelist's breaks

in our slang is capacious if no worse. They are only our punishment for the hash our own writers make of Briticisms. Still, when Miss Kaye-Smith's Americans put *sure* and a comma to everything like stage Paddies, when her young Southron aristocrat addresses his command as *kids* and guesses he will *beat it* out of Vicksburg, when her plantation darky says, "Sho, you'm better in a minnut. Sho, we do jest be in Warrenton," I for one feel that our punishment is greater than I can bear.

But the deeper trouble is that her characters (or character, Rainger being the only one in this part worth attention) are as sadly fudged through three-fifths of the book as the Civil War material. To risk a bit of English slang, for the sake of the knightly amende, her theme and her psychology are all over the shop. Since a constant tragic love (well imagined too, at the beginning) has goaded Rainger's nature to challenge and wander, Miss Kaye-Smith seems to feel that some fresh love may hearten us all to endure her American doldrums. So she engages Rainger to a pasteboard Southern girl, who shoots herself during the sack of her home by Sherman's negro soldiers. At this juncture you miss the Rev. Thomas Dixon.

The penny-a-lining circles of early mid-Victorian London are possibly as

documented as can be. Miss Smith has small heart in this business. It is dull. In Rainger's affair with a girl novelist and the good it does him, she shows some authentic perception. The novelist, however, is not realized. Rainger's futile neurotic father is a study, but obscured in a sort of near-poetic haze. Mr. Bellack, the agnostic country parson, intended for a brilliant characterization, is a bore. Rainger's letters to him from The States are worse than the epistolatory padding Mr. Chambers used to rely on. As for Rainger, I am far from saying that a real man (and what is more to the point, a plausible character) could not have his sensibilities and his restlessness in combination with his instinct of reversion to the soil. Rainger, however, doesn't hold together.

The Isle of Oxney parts have smacked of Philipotts to one reader. Here fault is to be found less with the people than with the over-written and over-colored background. Miss Kaye-Smith is complacent about her line-writing; she feels she is doing Oxney rather well. I feel that if she could have undergone a few years of shrewd blue-pencil surgery in the journalism she scorns, she would now be an abler writer than she is.

THE CHALLENGE TO SIRIUS. By SHEILA KAYE-SMITH. E. P. Dutton & Co. \$1.90.

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A gallant, swinging romance of conspiracy, misadventure and of love that counts the world well lost, and crowns and kingdoms of minor worth.

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